D.C. Night Club Is Rocked by Blast

An explosion apparently caused by a bomb severely damaged the Celebrity Room, a second-floor night club at 421 11th St. NW, early yesterday.

No injuries were reported, but the explosion collapsed part of the Celebrity Room ceiling, knocked out one wall, broke all second-floor windows, and overturned booths and tables.

Police refused to speculate on the cause of the blast.

However, it was learned yesterday that police recovered fragments of a timing device and evidence of powerful explosives, perhaps several sticks of dynamite, in the debris after the explosion.

The night club is on the second floor of a three-story building, above a Chinese restaurant and below a storeroom.

Samuel Schanker, manager of the night club, which employs striptease performers, said he had "no idea" why anyone would have put a bomb there.

He said the club closed "without incident" at 2:30 a.m. yesterday and had had "no history of trouble of any kind."

The explosion occurred at 4:15 a.m., about two hours after the night club had closed and only minutes after Officer Kenneth D. Fagin, a first district patrolman, had made a routine check of the building. Police said Fagin was 15 feet from the front door when he heard the blast.

Investigators said it was apparently in the men's room of the Celebrity Room.

Police estimated the damage at "several thousand dollars" and Schanker said it would be several days before the club could be reopened.

The Am-Chi Chinese restaurant on the first floor received only minor damage in its kitchen, which is underneath the second-floor men's room. Employees said the restaurant probably would be open for business today.

Police discounted the possibility of a gas explosion after two different sets of inspectors from Washington Gas Light Co. found the gas mains in order.